

Message Text

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21

ACTION ORM-01

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-07 ISO-00 DHA-02 L-03 PM-04 NSC-05

SP-02 SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 IO-10 DODE-00

INRE-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /069 W
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O P 130330Z AUG 75

FM AMCONSUL HONG KONG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6380

INFO AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE PRIORITY

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L HONG KONG 9308

E.O.11652: XGDS-2

TAGS: LACS UNHCR VS HK FR

SUBJECT: UNHCH FLIGHT FROM SAIGON TO HONG KONG

REF: HONG KONG 9165 (NOTAL)

1. UNHCR CHARTER FLIGHT SCHEDULED ON AUGUST 12 TO CARRY
THIRD COUNTRY NATIONALS FROM SAIGON TO HONG KONG DID NOT
REACH HONG KONG. THE AIRCRAFT, WHICH WAS A ROYAL
AIR LAO CARAVELLE, DEPARTED VIENTIANE DURING MORNING
OF AUGUST 12 AS SCHEDULED AND ARRIVED AT SAIGON BUT WAS THEN
DIVERTED TO BANGKOK WITH FRENCH PASSENGERS. ALEXANDRE CA-
SELLA, UNHCR REPRESENTATIVE ARRANGING THE AIRLIFT, PROVIDED
CONGEN WITH HIS EXPLANATION OF EVENTS AS PIECED TO-
GETHER FROM REPORTS FROM BANGKOK AND VIENTIANE. ACCORDING
TO CASELLA, WHEN CARAVELLE ARRIVED IN SAIGON, IT WAS NOT
GIVEN PERMISSION TO PROCEED TO HONG KONG ALTHOUGH THIS
ROUTING HAS BEEN PREVIOUSLY APPROVED BY PRG REP IN
HANOI. CASELLA SPECULATED THAT THERE MIGHT HAVE
BEEN A COMMUNICATION BREAK-DOWN BETWEEN SAIGON AND
HANOI. A SMALLER AIRCRAFT CHARTERED BY THE FRENCH ALSO
ARRIVED IN SAIGON FROM VIENTIANE DURING THE SAME TIME.
SINCE THE FRENCH HAD MORE PASSENGERS IN SAIGON THAN
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COULD BE ACCOMMODATED IN THEIR SMALLER AIRCRAFT, A SWITCH

WAS MADE ALLOWING THE FRENCH TO USE THE CARAVELLE FOR THEIR FLIGHT TO BANGKOK AND UNHCR TO USE THE SMALLER AIR-CRAFT FOR RETURNING ETHNIC VIETNAMESE RESIDENTS OF LAOS BACK TO VIENTIANE.

2. CASSELLA SAID THAT HE WOULD NOT ATTEMPT ANY MORE SAIGON HONG KONG FLIGHTS THIS WEEK. CASELLA INTENDS TO RETURN TO VIENTIANE TODAY (AUGUST 13) AND GO TO HANOI WITH THE HOPE OF RESCHEDULING SAIGON-HONG KONG FLIGHTS SOMETIME NEXT WEEK. CASELLA PROMISED CONGEN OFFICER THAT IF HE IS ABLE TO RESCHEDULE FLIGHTS TO HONG KONG HE WOULD PERSONNALLY TRY TO RIDE THE FIRST FLIGHT AND THAT HE WOULD ASK EMBASSY VIENTIANE TO CABLE HONG KONG WHEN HE DEPARTS.
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